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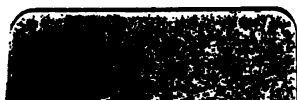
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SOME REAL WANTS
AND SOME
LEGITIMATE CLAIMS
OF
THE WORKING CLASSES.

BY
WILLIAM THACKERAY MARRIOTT, B.A.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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"When I speak, either in this place or elsewhere, of the labouring classes, or of labourers as a 'class,' I use those phrases in compliance with custom, and as descriptive of an existing, but by no means a necessary or permanent, state of social relations. I do not recognise as either just or salutary, a state of society in which there is any class which is not labouring; any human beings exempt from bearing their share of the necessary labours of human life, except those unable to labour, or who have fairly earned rest by previous toil. So long, however, as the great social evil exists of a non-labouring class, labourers also constitute a class, and may be spoken of, though only provisionally, in that character."—J. S. MILL.  
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LONDON :
GEORGE MANWARING, (SUCCESSOR TO JOHN CHAPMAN,)
8, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.
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1860.

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TO

IVIE MACKIE, ESQ.,

MAYOR OF MANCHESTER.

SIR,

The subjects discussed in the following pages are those upon which I have lectured at various times in this city. Many who heard the lectures have desired that they should be published. To do so was impracticable, as they were not written, but delivered from notes. I have therefore endeavoured to embody the opinions expressed in the form of a pamphlet.

Since the suggestions urged are intended for the consideration of ratepayers and their representatives, and since they were first made with reference to this city, I take advantage of your permission to dedicate them to you, our chief magistrate.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

W. T. MARRIOTT.

MANCHESTER,

June, 1860.

SOME REAL WANTS
AND SOME
LEGITIMATE CLAIMS
OF
THE WORKING CLASSES.

THE greatest calamity that can befall a boy at school is to hold that position which many fond, foolish parents are desirous he should hold—namely, to be his master's "pet." The whole system—if system it can be called—of "pets" and "favourites" is bad in the extreme. Its effects upon the masters, upon the generality of the scholars, and upon the favoured few themselves, are equally pernicious. The minds of the former are warped and blinded; the real interests of the majority are neglected; even the few are not educated and improved, but pampered and spoiled.

A calamity similar to this has long been hanging over the heads of a certain portion of the English nation—that portion comprehended under the title, "The Working Classes." The "British Workman" is a decided pet with the public. With his brawny arm, expanded chest, and honest mien, he figures in prints and paintings. As a "son of toil," and one "who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow," he garnishes many an oratorical address, and is held up in conspicuous contrast to some other portions of the community, who, it is insinuated, do not do so. His sterling virtues are feelingly depicted in many an impassioned poem. In popular novels he frequently flourishes as the faultless hero. The fierce warriors, hoary-bearded priests, and

gallant knights of former days are nowhere ; they are totally eclipsed. Working-men are the idols of the hour. Their interests and welfare and happiness form the burthen of polite conversation. Public men, ministers, members of parliament, the clergy, philanthropists, work with their especial interests in view. Every measure is tested by this, "What will be its effect upon the working classes?" Even polished ladies express an interest in their behalf, and talk of them as "dear, good, honest creatures."

That this interest should be flattering and gratifying to the class on whose behalf it is expressed, is what might naturally be anticipated. Yet such is not the case. The hulking navvy, the shrewd mechanic, and nine-tenths of the artisans and labourers are either utterly indifferent to the regard professed towards them, or consider it a sham, adopted by men who have ulterior objects in view. In consequence they are accused of ingratitude. "Much is done *for* them, and they appreciate it not," is now the complaint of many whose sentiments are undergoing a reactionary process. That the really great and wise and learned men of the day should regard these benevolent expressions of feeling with delight is also what might reasonably be expected. But neither is this the case. As a rule, the leading philanthropists are all men of third or fourth rate standing in every respect. The doubt, therefore, suggests itself, is the deep interest, so loudly trumpeted, genuine? Is it real and sincere ; or is it mere food for tea-table prattle and gossip? Are the very few spoiled at the expense of the majority's welfare?

As a proof of its genuineness, philanthropists may point to the standing monuments of their benevolence. A tree is known by its fruit. Philanthropy has an abundant crop to show. The hospitals, infirmaries, and establishments for attending the sick and for training of nurses ; the improved gaols and numerous reformatories for the young ; the sisterhoods of mercy, penitentiaries, and female refuges ; the clothing clubs, savings' banks, and provident societies ; the baths, wash-houses, and model lodging-houses ; the curtailing the hours of labour ; the mechanics' institutions, night schools, and reading rooms ; the young men's Christian associations, mutual improvement

societies, and church institutes; the public parks, with their exhibitions and museums; the churches and chapels and schools that are springing up on every side; the societies whose main object is to disseminate copies of the Bible and goodly tracts; the ever-increasing number of clergy, ministers of religion, and city missionaries—are all, to a certain degree, due to the efforts of philanthropy.

These monuments are certainly imposing. They prove that great exertions have been made and much money spent. But still all this fruit, so tastefully displayed and so elaborately exposed to view, is not intended to be eaten—it is but fruit, whose seed is to be sown again to produce other and better fruit. All these institutions and establishments and associations are but means to attain an end. The means may be beautiful and imposing to look upon; but the criterion by which their real value must be tested is this—Have they accomplished the end aimed at?

Now, that they have done an immense amount of good is doubtless true. That any one particular scheme has exactly answered the anticipations of its sanguine projectors is extremely doubtful; but that from them all, taken *en masse*, much benefit has been derived by those, for whose benefit they were intended, is certain. Witness the vast improvement, physical, intellectual, and moral, observable in them—an improvement whose stealthy growth it is as difficult to discern in its actual progress as that of the child or plant; but which is palpably manifest when any two distinct periods or cycle of years are taken as landmarks—an improvement which is at once the result of many different causes, as well political as social; but towards which the most strenuous anti-philanthropists will hardly deny that the efforts of benevolent individuals have done much. The people are better fed, better clad, better housed, better educated, better behaved, than heretofore.

But is the great evil which more than any other tends to keep up the masses in destitution and degradation much diminished? Have the efforts hitherto made been successful in weaning men from those thirsty habits which have so long enthralled them? If they have, what mean all the complaints that were so loudly uttered during the past year? What

meaneth it that Mr. Recorder Hill in his address to the Birmingham jury, and the *Times* in its leader on that address, join chorus to the tune of Solomon's "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity," that in England it is still the old story, "Drunkenness, drunkenness, all is drunkenness?" What meaneth it that almost every judge in his address made a statement to which all who should know much on the subject assented—magistrates, gaol governors and chaplains, the police and (most touching and melancholy testimony of all) the criminals themselves, that to drunkenness as to a direct cause, may be traced by far the greatest proportion of crime and poverty in this country :—that it is not only that men when in what is termed a "state of liquor," cause those rows and brawls during which so many aggravated offences against the person are committed, but that drink is also the cause of utterly destroying the effectual working power of hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands. It saps their strength, blunts their skill, renders precarious their health, and superinduces those irregular habits, which deprive their labour of half its value, inasmuch as upon their punctual attendance no reliance can be placed. By it numbers are converted from good to bad workmen—in consequence lose their places, are thrown idle upon the world, reduced to the extremities of want and poverty, and so frequently compelled either to starve (a consummation for which they have no taste or inclination) or else to resort to dishonest and criminal methods of supporting existence.

The evil exists to an alarming extent. Its existence is itself a proof that the efforts hitherto made have not been successful in checking that vice which must be checked if any real improvement is to be made. If the evil is to be diminished, its existence must be felt and known by the majority—not by a few benevolent individuals.

To be acquainted with the disease is an absolute pre-requisite of its cure. To be convinced of sinfulness is, we are told, the necessary antecedent to repentance. To know the exact point at which the shoe pinches is essential if the agonized foot is to be relieved. So Englishmen must be convinced that there is an evil in the social state before they can be aroused to efforts of improvement. That there is such an evil, is certain : no mere hobgoblin or

dressed-up scarecrow manufactured by evils discovery-mongers, and mare's nests-finding individuals—(a numerous and bustling tribe) but a patent evil—an evil dangerous in its tendencies, disastrous in its results, alarming from its wide-spread ramifications and most ruinous in its costliness—an evil which not only tortures its immediate victims with misery of every description and wretchedness of every degree—with want and poverty, crime and disease, often with death and madness ; but one which also inflicts upon the whole nation an enormous loss—a loss in the effectual labour it destroys—in the vast amount of money that through it is misappropriated, and in the cost of the measures adopted for its prevention. About it much has been said in deprecation—so much that to many the very mention of the subject is loathsome and repulsive ; but little has been done in amelioration. Yet the subject is one to which attention *must* eventually be paid.

If any effectual remedy is to be proposed, the causes of the disease should first be sought. The neglect of inquiring fully into its sources, and patiently investigating its origin, and calmly tracing its progress, is probably the reason why so many benevolent efforts for its prevention have proved abortive. The question should be treated as a scientific one. It is one of the chief questions in social science. The cause and nature of the evil should be known first ; then let remedies be suggested and their merits considered.

The question is, what is the cause of men becoming intoxicated characters ? Is it because they like it ? because they love drink ? because they have a natural taste for that which is low and degraded, and bestial ? There is no reason to suppose any such thing. The most confirmed drunkards, in their sober moments, abhor with the intensest hate the vice to which they are such abject slaves. Young men generally, at the age of nineteen or twenty, scorn and despise the very state to which they themselves are frequently reduced before they have passed their thirtieth year. Most become intoxicated, and acquire the habit of becoming intoxicated, unknown to themselves. In many cases it may be observed, that those who in early manhood have been hearty, healthy, steady, respectable young fellows, have, in

the course of a few years, undergone a total and entire change, and, before ten years have elapsed, become habitual drunkards, and, in consequence, bad fathers, bad husbands, bad neighbours, bad men. The change has not been sudden. It has been gradual, very gradual, so gradual that in tracing its course and in endeavouring to account for its progress, it seems almost impossible to point to any distinct landmarks by which to indicate the period when the change began to operate.

The evil habit has wrought itself into their system and entirely revolutionized the tone of their morals, while they appear to have been mere passive instruments. As one who on a journey sleeps, while his slumbering carcase is borne along at the rate of forty miles an hour, till he is awoke by the shrill demand of the ticket-collector, is utterly astonished to find himself transported, in what appears so very brief a period, so many hundred miles from his starting point, so are they when they contemplate the two distinct positions they have held in life—the position of a sober youth at twenty, and the position of a drunken man at thirty—equally surprised and confounded, equally at a loss to account for the rapidity with which they have travelled from one position to another. What they now are is palpable; but had they been told when young that they would become such, the probability is they would have felt themselves grossly insulted; for were the two conditions to be placed before them, that of the sober man and that of the drunkard, and were their choice to be freely determined by their will and not swayed and subverted by their appetites and passions, there cannot be the smallest shadow of a doubt but that they would choose that condition which is the result of sobriety. They are deceived, cheated, beguiled, swindled into being drunkards. To understand *why* and *how* it is necessary to consider the question *when*.

It is not during their work hours. No master will complain that Englishmen are idle or bad workmen. That they might be better is probable; but as a matter of fact, both in regard to skill and perseverance and energy they are superior to any workmen known to exist. The greater portion of the day they spend as they ought, in doing their duty, each in his particular sphere. It is when their work is finished, during their leisure hours, that

they are entrapped into drinking. Why? Because, during those leisure hours the majority have scarcely anything else with which to engage themselves—no fixed place of resort except the public-house—no fixed occupation or amusement except such as can there alone be supplied.

To make the case clear, take an example. Suppose that of a young man who lives near the centre of the town; he is at his work betimes in the morning; during the day his employment is tiring, fatiguing, and confining; he does not return home till six or seven in the evening. What is he to do during the hours before he goes to his rest? That he should betake himself to some laborious employment either of mind or body is out of the question. His whole system is unfitted for it. That he should remain at home with his parents during the entire evening it is equally unreasonable to expect. "Good people" may advise it; but their advice will appear preposterous when the circumstances of the case are duly considered. There is no temptation, no inducement to stay at home. The houses of the working classes are not like the stately mansions of the rich, supplied with large suites of apartments into which those who choose can join together in parties and divert themselves with their games and their pleasures. On the contrary, they are small; few have more than one sitting-room. That room has to serve for the whole family, belonging to which may be four or five or more children. Their play, and noise, and mischief, and the correction they receive in the form of sundry slaps and whippings, and their consequent cries and screams, and the bustle attendant upon their being housed for the night, are not likely to be agreeable and soothing to a young man whose system is fatigued with a hard day's work. When a man—and especially a young man—has worked hard during the day, he has fairly earned, and richly deserves, pleasure and enjoyment. Nature herself demands that he should have recreation—means to revivify and reinvigorate and re-establish him for the ensuing day's labour. In the town this is an indispensable condition of health; in the country the case is different—there labour itself is recreation. When he digs or ploughs, when he sows his seed or reaps his corn, when he drives his cattle to the field or tends his sheep in the meadow,

the countryman is not only doing that by which he earns his bread, but is at the same time calling into play powers and faculties the very exercise of which is at once a pleasure and a gain; and every moment he is inhaling air which affords strength and support and stamina to his frame; whereas in the town, the work, though perhaps not in itself unwholesome, is, in the generality of cases, more fatiguing than strengthening, more relaxing than bracing, and the air is certainly not as pure, refreshing, and invigorating, as that enjoyed in the country. As a matter of fact, the health of those who inhabit the centre of our towns is greatly inferior to that of those who live in the country. One great reason is the want of recreation; for where can that, which is an absolute requisite, be procured?

Suppose it is winter—there are two places to which the fatigued young artisan can resort. One has been erected by benevolent individuals for the good of the working classes; the other is kept by an enterprising son of Albion for the benefit of his own pocket. Whether it is that in the one case the motive to action is stronger and more genuine than in the other, the incentive to energetic exertion more keen, we say not, but leave the reader to judge which studies and understands best the tastes of his customers, which holds out the most alluring inducements, which is most likely to succeed in attracting the largest number of guests.

On the one hand, some mile distant or so, is a Mechanics' Institution; the building is a fine one, grand, lofty, spacious, noble looking; within is a large and airy reading-room; its tables are well covered with newspapers, reviews, and magazines. The floor is clean, though uncarpeted; for the most part unmatted. The chairs are neat to behold, but not inviting for the weary to rest upon; they are of a hard bare wood—an economical wood of a peculiar hardness which no amount of use can wear out. The room is warm, but where the warmth comes from it is difficult for an ordinary individual to discover; it appears to sneak in with the air. At any rate there is not that which delights the eye to behold on a chilly, frosty winter evening—the blaze of a cheerful fire. The rules which guide the conduct of members are somewhat stringent. No smoking is allowed. As

for drink, whether in the shape of tea, or coffee, or beer, or spirits, or wine, it is strictly prohibited. In short, all the arrangements seem to be made with a supreme contempt for anything so gross and low and vulgar as bodily comfort. All are admirably adapted to raise mind above matter, and thus to leave the intellect free and unshackled to soar above the baser wants of the earthy man.

A hundred yards from the artisan's abode is either a public-house or a gin-palace. In the former are two or three snug little rooms, with cushioned forms attached to the walls ; a few easy chairs ; a newspaper or two ; pipes and tobacco, and as much liquor of every description as a customer may choose to call for. The latter, the gin-palace, has more lofty pretensions. It is a palace, and men like to be within the walls of palaces. With its imposing spirit-vaults, brilliantly lighted, gorgeously painted and gilded, and profusely furnished with large and tempting barrels, whence floweth that which maketh glad the heart of man ; sometimes with an inner room, equally as brilliantly lighted, equally as gorgeously decorated, and cheered moreover by the blaze of a glorious fire, and perhaps enlivened with the strains of song and the sounds of music ; it does indeed stand out in striking relief amid the dirty dingy hovels with which it is so frequently surrounded. It does look cheery, and inviting, and enticing, and alluring. It has that within it which attracts. It is surrounded with an air of comfort. It holds out many inducements which appeal to the social feelings of our nature. Men are social animals. Within them is an instinct which draws them together. They like to meet, and chat, and joke, and be cheery ; and to the good things which nature has provided for the taste and the palate, they have no objection. Cleanliness, and comfort, and well ordered arrangements have their attractions. When, then, is borne in mind the condition of many working men's houses—a condition in a great measure necessitated by the circumstances of the case, and in many instances aggravated by various accidents, by mismanagement, want of order and cleanliness on the part of the wife, and other causes ; and when it is remembered that the only two places to which he can resort are the gin-palace or the reading-room, and when are taken into consideration the

necessary restrictions of the latter with regard to talking, laughing, and playing, and the unnecessary disregard that has hitherto been paid to comfort, and that at the former everything is contrived to suit and accommodate the taste and ease of the customer, so that he may sit on one chair with his legs on another, his pipe in his mouth, and his glass of grog by his side, chatting merrily with companions who, for the time at least, are hearty and good-natured, or listening to the strains of gay and enlivening music—is it wonderful that a young man of the ordinary stamp, not a rare genius who will devote every spare minute to the acquisition of knowledge and the prosecution of his studies—not a “good young man,” who spends his time in lectures and chapel-goings, and controversy, and like profitable employment—nor yet one of those few really good ones who have so conquered self that they will stay at home not to please themselves but to gratify the wishes of their parents—but an ordinary young man, with all the passions, feelings, tastes, likes, and dislikes of an ordinary young man—is it wonderful that after a hard day’s work he should prefer the gin-palace to the reading-room—the public-house to the mechanics’ institution?

That it should be so is a pity, doubtless—a grievous pity. On a wet evening, on a half holiday, at those times when there appears nothing to do, when the hours, for want of fixed occupation, hang heavily on the hands, youths for the first time enter the precincts of the gin-palace. Its doors are opened wide to them. Within is always a welcome reception. They seem to enter naturally, and as a matter of course, little recking of the future evil and the future misery in store for them. They see the present and look not to the future. The bait is tempting—they take it without observing the trap beyond. Sad and melancholy it certainly is, but it is not surprising—it is what alone we have right to expect under existing circumstances.

It is easy enough to denounce “free-and-easies,” and vilify those who frequent them, but is not the reason they are so numerous attended because they alone hold out rational hopes of social enjoyment? According to the general opinion of Englishmen, the amusements themselves and the entertainments there

afforded are not wrong. As to the advantages of smoking and of drinking alcoholic liquors, there may be differences of opinion ; still the great majority, and the rich and educated majority too, agree, that used and not abused they are harmless, if not beneficial. The rich like "free-and-easies." They have them not in public places, but at their own houses. For the fragrant weed, for the glass of toddy, and for the songs and music they have as keen a relish as the working classes—perhaps a keener. The difference is, they can have their desires gratified in places and under circumstances where there are not the same temptations to licentiousness and excess. Amusements and recreations after the day's work, men, be they rich or poor, must and will have, nay, ought to have. If enjoyment can be procured in a respectable place, and under favourable conditions, the majority would prefer it. If it cannot, they are forced to resort to places not respectable—places often rendered worse in consequence of being scouted and tabooed by the richer classes.

Suppose it is summer. There is certainly then not the same reason for the young men to resort to the public-houses or the gin-palaces. During the long, pleasant evenings they may stroll about and enjoy the air ; but even then, strolling and walking is hardly the natural exercise for youth. Something requiring more activity and exertion, which at once calls into play the powers of the body and the mind, some such amusements as boating and cricket, which require strength and skill, are more in keeping with their tastes and capabilities. Yet for these not the slightest provision is made. To enjoy them to the majority is impossible. Boating is necessarily confined to the few. For cricket or foot-ball there are no grounds. There are the parks ; but, in addition to the small ground allotted for games being always crowded (thus showing how they are appreciated), they are on the outskirts of the town, and so far removed from the majority of its inhabitants, that before the players arrive there, the time is half consumed during which they ought to have been joining in the game. The walk to them is not in itself refreshing—not through pretty lanes with green hedges, but streets hardly paved, and encompassed and blocked in with tall, never-ending, rows of dingy houses. The difficulties, in fact, are so great that the

majority, notwithstanding the taste they have for athletic sports, do not enjoy them, but, in lieu of them, saunter idly about the streets, and contract those evil habits which are blamed so severely by society, though no proper means are adopted to counteract them.

These then, I should say, are the answers to the two questions proposed. Men take to drink during their leisure hours. They do so because they have nothing else with which to employ themselves. Idleness—an almost necessary idleness—is the root of the evil. Any remedy to meet their case must provide occupation for those hours now spent in the public-house—occupation at once amusing, interesting, and beneficial.

It is far easier to pull down than to build up. The duties of the sculptor are more difficult than those of the iconoclast. To point out evils is one thing—to reform them another. In the first instance, all that is required is to ascertain and investigate facts—in the other, experiments must be essayed, and however true and just the principles upon which they are based may appear, success alone is the test by which they stand or fall. If they do not accomplish the results proposed, they are failures. It is, therefore, with no small diffidence that after referring to some great existing evils, and freely commenting on various schemes hitherto adopted for their prevention, I venture to suggest three definite plans as partial remedies—plans by no means original, but such as have not yet much engaged the attention of the public, or had a fair trial to test their merits.

Recreation, out-door recreation, is absolutely necessary for health. If so, provision should be made so that the working classes might procure it. This is essential—it is of primary importance. It is *its absolute necessity* that ought to be urged upon society. Many are inclined to look upon recreation with a friendly eye, and in it to take a kindly interest. If asked for a subscription towards a cricket club, or a Whitsuntide feast, they will willingly put their hand into their pocket, and gladly give their quota, and good-humouredly observe, that the “lower orders, poor things, should have some enjoyment—they toil so hard, they deserve it,” and kindly will they express a wish that the weather may enhance the enjoyment by its fineness; but the

very tone of their condescending remarks, the very flippancy of their observations, indicate that in the subject they take no deep interest, that it has no hold upon their minds, scarce a place in their thoughts: that they regard it as a matter of mere secondary importance—a matter which they are very well pleased has been taken in hand by some good-natured individuals, but one which, if entirely neglected, would not be of any great consequence. Yet if the health and sobriety and respectability of their work-people be of value, this recreation, which they regard so lightly, is an absolute necessity, a condition indispensable.

That it greatly promotes bodily health none will deny, and good bodily health in more ways than one affects good morals. It has been said that a man with a bad digestion cannot be a true Christian. Doubtless the condition of the stomach affects the temper, and the temper has no slight connexion with the morals. Inferior health, the low spirits resulting therefrom, the feeling (to use a homely phrase) "out of sorts," weak and debilitated, good for nothing, frequently drives men to the gin-palace to seek for comfort and excitement. Any means that prevent this sickly health are to a certain degree preventives to drunkenness; in so far as recreation does this, it promotes morality—it promotes it in addition, more effectually, by affording profitable employment for that time which is otherwise killed and abused and dissipated.

Of its effect in this way the two Universities may be mentioned as examples. The notion frequently formed, by the uninitiated, of an undergraduate of either University is, that he is a fast young fellow, given to wine and smoking, and revelry and dissipation. The notion is formed, not from the present habits of the place, but from what, according to tradition, they used to be some thirty or forty years ago. Then, the young bloods residing at those venerable institutions for the benefit of their education, copied the example of their sires in the country, and drank like fishes. If tradition be true, they were dissipated—frequently debauched; gambling and drinking consumed a large portion of their time. At the present day, a drunken undergraduate is a rare exception. Dissipation is confined to the very very few. On the score of morality the majority might creditably compare

with any other body of men. This change for the better is doubtless due in a great measure to the change in the general habits and modes of thinking of society. Undergraduates, like everybody else, are affected by the coercion of public opinion ; but one of two things is certain, either the change is also greatly due to the increase of athletic sports and manly games amongst them, or else those games and sports are the results of their improved habits. In either case the argument holds good in favour of the morality of proper recreation. They now boat and cricket, and enjoy other games of skill. Their leisure hours are filled up—they have not time for drinking and dissipating. The sports now indulged in have this advantage over hunting—in which probably more formerly took part than at present—that whereas it, “King of Sports” though it be, does not exact from its devotees any great self-denial or abstinence from the glass and the pipe—the others do. With them, excess either in eating or drinking, or sensual indulgence, is absolutely incompatible. All who know anything of the Universities are agreed in this, that the sports have a most beneficial effect : they afford occupation for those necessary hours of leisure which must otherwise have been spent in idleness, or in what idleness begets ; and the occupation strengthens and invigorates their health, and more, keeps them out of temptation and delivers them from evil.

The mode in which parents treat their children is also a case in point. It used to be thought—there are some who still think—that the surest method to restrain their sons from vice is to debar them, so long as they have the power, from those games which in many cases are apparently productive of evil, such as “billiards,” “cards,” “dominoes,” &c. Many now have changed their tactics. Perceiving that the evils are not inherent in the amusements themselves, but only in their accidents, in the places at which alone they could be procured, the company there to be met, the excesses which accompanied them, and the abuses with which they were surrounded,—the very amusements which they once prohibited they now afford, the very games they once deprecated, they now supply at their own homes. The result is obvious. Young men have their companions to their own houses, and amuse themselves freely, while at the same time

they are in no small degree affected indirectly by the influence of those who desire to keep them from evil. There is a sinister saying respecting the sons of ministers of religion and strict individuals, which implies that their children are by no means so highly moral as those brought up under the so-called worldly system.

If, then, recreation be an absolute requisite for health, and if health be really valuable both for its own sake and for the effect it has upon morality, it does seem strange that no provision is made for the working classes to procure it. Yet such is the fact. At present it is almost a physical impossibility. The parks are the only provision, and they, as I observed before, are not available to the majority. What is required, in addition to the parks, is, that in various parts of the towns there be portions of land cleared and set aside as public playgrounds—not some monster ones for the use of a large circuit, but smaller ones in each district. They should be near, at the very doors of those for whose benefit they are intended. The advantages of such would be innumerable. Indeed, if health be a requisite, they are indispensable. At present, as a matter of fact, the child of the town-operative, from the day of its birth to that of its death, has little chance of ever enjoying robust and vigorous health. Its struggle for existence is real, and at an enormous disadvantage.

The first few years of childhood should almost entirely be spent in the open air, in childish play and childish games. Preferable to all artificial schemes of training and developing is this simple plan of affording them the means of enjoying what nature so bountifully supplies. It is beneficial from the strengthening effects of the air they inhale, and from the exercise and natural development it affords their growing limbs. Yet in towns it is all but impossible for the children of the working classes to have this requisite, except in most questionable places. They must either be confined to the house in small rooms, or else turned out loose, not into green meadows and richly clad fields, not even on open spaces of ground through which is no thoroughfare, but into the streets to play on hard flags and pavements, to run imminent risks and dangers from carts and waggons and coaches,

and to be a pest and annoyance to passers-by. This last grievance is felt, and felt by those who never feel anything disagreeable without crying out, so that now the very play of children—that play and frolic which the rich encourage and delight to behold in their own offspring—is made a civil crime in that of the poor. To bowl a hoop, to fly a kite, to play at “hockey,” is an offence for the police to take cognizance of. To bathe is a sin; for so modest are our modern gentlemen, that if boys of twelve expose their naked forms within a mile of a footpath, they shudder in dread, and vehemently complain lest the virgin purity of their chaste daughters and venerable aunts be irretrievably shocked and marred. Ever and anon the daily press teems with letters from respectable old gentlemen and consequential fathers of families, and pampered young horsemen, complaining of the risk and inconvenience they themselves have personally incurred from such abominable pastimes. Hard indeed it is, that a comfortable “paterfamilias” should receive a blow on his cheek, or a young millionaire be thrown from his horse, or a “curled darling” of our nation have his exquisite garments bespattered with mud, or a “sweet girl’s” purity of mind be imperilled; but what boots it that hundreds and thousands of children should pine away in sickness and disease, and die before half their time is run! Stop the danger to the few—they are rich; let the many rot and perish—they are poor. It is indeed awful to contemplate that one rich man should fall from his horse and break his collar-bone or be killed; ’tis but a small thing that a thousand little corpses are borne to their grave before their time.*

There are few pleasanter sights to behold than that of children on the greensward, or in the scented hay-field, frisking and frolicking and revelling in the exuberance of animal spirits;

* As an instance of the thoughtless or heartless selfishness sometimes displayed by the rich towards the children of the poor, the following case, which recently came under the writer’s own notice, is an example. Some forty or fifty boys, varying in age from twelve to sixteen, and who during the day are employed in the mills and warehouses of a large town, agreed together to form a cricket club. In procuring a field they had great difficulties. Eventually one was obtained at the back of a row of houses. Here of an evening, and on a Saturday afternoon, they met and played. A middle-aged gentleman, inhabiting one of the houses, complained to the person who had let them the field, that they were a

how sickening is the contrast—to see them in the narrow streets crawling on the hard flags, wallowing in the gutters, sprawling in the midst of slush and dirt, begrimed with filth, squalid from want of fresh air! No wonder there should be a difference in their health and appearance. The former are encouraged to enjoy that for which they have a natural instinct. The latter are almost entirely prevented by physical circumstances. When a little older, the just and equitable law comes in to increase the difficulties. Doubtless, bowling of hoops, flying of kites, playing at hockey, are dangerous practices in a public thoroughfare, and swarms of boys bathing in the front of one's house may justly be considered a disagreeable nuisance. It is well they should be prevented; but surely the just mode of preventing them is to supply proper places where the children can enjoy that to which they have a right and a claim, and where the exercise of that right will not be dangerous and disagreeable to others. Till that is done they are as much justified in annoying their neighbour as that neighbour is in withholding from them the means requisite for their health. Perhaps, were a little more annoyance caused, their claims would stand a better chance of being listened to. Were a few eyes to be knocked out, horses startled, delicate nerves shocked, carriages run away with, collar-bones broken, limbs fractured; were some great dignitary to be immolated to this most righteous cause; perhaps public attention would be more effectually called to the subject.

Public playgrounds are absolutely requisite for the health of young children. They are equally requisite for that of boys and young men. Considering that the greater portion of work in all large towns, though not absolutely unhealthy, is, without doubt,

great nuisance. He had some influence with the individual, and, as the boys had no written agreement, they were deprived of their playground. Now observe the two results. The gain: a used-up gentleman could have his after-dinner nap without being disturbed by the merriment of boys—a matter doubtless of intense interest to himself personally, and of vast importance to the community generally. The loss: between forty and fifty boys—the daily occupation of whose life is not the most pleasant—are deprived of their healthy and natural recreation, and turned loose into the streets, to while away the hours that ought to be spent in play. If they should fall into mischief and wickedness, is it a wonder?

more fatiguing than strengthening, more enervating than invigorating, some means should be adopted to counteract the bad effects. The young man who works in the heated atmosphere of a mill, or is confined for hours to the desk, or who even spends his time within the precincts of a shop, does absolutely require bodily exercise to do away with some of the evils incident to these employments. Sedentary habits alone are bad ; the want of fresh air is worse. To counteract the evil, athletic sports are most useful. That there is a taste and relish for them is evident. In towns there are no spare plots of ground, rough, rugged, and uninviting though they be, which do not literally swarm with occupants engaged in play. So long as the means are there—so long as there is the first requisite—a place provided, boys and young men are ready and willing enough to use and exercise the muscles and powers of their bodies : those powers and muscles which are so beneficently constituted, that their legitimate exercise at once increases health and affords pleasure. But presently the land on which many a genial hour has been passed, and many a pleasant game enjoyed, is sold and built upon. The leisure hours are there, the taste is there, where to play is not. Something must be done to fill up the vacant time. Some taste must be gratified. If to gratify the higher taste is utterly impossible, then they must be content with gratifying the lower one. This is the case. They resort to the only place open to them—the public-house ; and good Christians, who have deprived them of their land upon which to play, and left them entirely to themselves, hold up their hands in pious horror and exclaim, “How innately wicked they must be to frequent such naughty places !” and, as a sop to their conscience, forsooth, they subscribe ten shillings per year to support a city missionary in the neighbourhood they themselves have deserted.

If, then, the health of the children of the working classes be of any consequence ; if it be a matter of importance that the youth of this country should be kept from the public-houses, and that they should have, moreover, those exercises and pastimes and sports which promote their health and make them strong and muscular, and more worthy of that type of Englishman which we are so fond of picturing to our imagination—one

who, in physical strength, will excel the inhabitant of any other country—public playgrounds are essential. Allow the importance of the first, and the necessity of the latter is inevitable. In addition to their absolute necessity for these purposes, there would be attached to them many collateral advantages. To any neighbourhood, open, clear spaces of ground are beneficial. Like the squares of London, they play the part of lungs, through which the air can more freely circulate. This is, I believe, a point of no small importance in regard to the health of towns, though it is not one to be discussed here.

Many of the arguments advanced in favour of playgrounds apply equally well to the establishment of gymnasiums. The playgrounds would only serve for the summer months; there are still the winter evenings, with their spare hours. Any plan which would redeem those hours from being wasted, and worse than wasted, in wickedness and dissipation, would be invaluable. Night-schools do much; would all, who have the time, attend them, few schemes could be more advantageous. There, the hours which are otherwise the season of guilt, are converted into a time for improvement. The mind is educated, and fresh fields of enjoyment are opened. But, as a matter of fact, evening-classes are attended by the very very few. I know of no reliable statistics on this subject; but it requires hardly any observation to be convinced that those who attend them would scarcely amount to one-tenth part of the youth for whom they are intended. This, too, is what might be expected. The majority can hardly be blamed for not attending. The fatigue of the day has almost incapacitated them for mental exertion.

In the gymnasiums their time would be filled up with occupation which, if not so valuable as that to be found at the night-school, is far preferable to that afforded at the public-house. It seems almost a shame to mention the two in comparison. At the one the practices are worse than harmless—they are most pernicious; at the other they are not only harmless—they are most improving and beneficial. In the gymnasium, the time otherwise wasted and squandered in drinking at the public-house is spent in manly sports and games, in fencing, boxing, single-stick, and gymnastics. Here, of an evening, young men would

meet, with an especial object in view. This in itself is a matter of no small importance—to have some fixed occupation to look to. Numbers would strive to excel. To excel in feats of skill and prowess demands not merely strength of body, but also evokes many valuable qualities of mind and temper. Endurance, patience, perseverance, courage, pluck, self-control, self-denial, are as requisite to the winner as stout limbs, a deep chest, and hard muscles. Here, many who could not be expected to attend the night-school—who from various causes, from their constitution, and from the circumstances of the case, have not the taste for purely mental employment, would pass their time with profit and pleasure.

But yet, playgrounds and gymnasiums would by no means answer all purposes; there is still a great want to be supplied, a great evil to be counteracted. There are periods when men are so fatigued that they have neither a relish for mental occupation, nor feel equal to active bodily exercise; still they require some relaxation for the mind and the body. Too tired to enter into athletic sports, too wearied to read or study, something is requisite that will pass the time pleasantly, without exacting much exertion either from body or mind. How to obtain this, without at the same time contracting some evil, is a matter of no small difficulty. What a rich man would do under such circumstances is plain. He would probably stay at home with a few friends, or resort to his Club, and there chat and gossip, and smoke his cigar, or take part in some games which are pleasurable without being fatiguing, such as backgammon, whist, or billiards. This the working man cannot do. The only places where he can indulge the taste which he has in common with his richer neighbour are the public-houses. To these there are many and great objections. How to mitigate them is extremely difficult.

Naturally, men, and especially those who are not highly educated, seem to be prone to excess. In the gratification of their taste for pleasure and enjoyment, checks to deter are necessary, not allurements to entice. Yet, at the public-houses the former are wanting; the latter always present. The more liquor sold, the more money in the landlord's pocket. It is too much to

expect from human nature—especially publican human nature—that they should check a vice which fills their coffers; they encourage it, and not always by fair and honest means. The very liquors sold to quench the thirst have often that within them which excites fresh thirst.

There are some who altogether object to the articles supplied at the public-house—to the beer, wine, spirits, and tobacco—there are others who have equally strong objections to all games of chance. To these I do not wish to address myself. To the great majority of Englishmen who do approve of these things, when properly used, I would suggest this question :—Is it not possible for the working men to enjoy the same pleasures as the rich without incurring injury?

The first plans adopted to counteract in some degree the effects of the public-houses were the Mechanics' Institutions and the reading-rooms. In this respect they have not been successful; consequently they are at present undergoing a species of modification. In some, the stringent rules are being relaxed, and more attention is being paid to comfort; tea and coffee are allowed as beverages, and a very few have gone to the extreme length of opening smoking-rooms. If they are to succeed, they will have to go a step further—that is, if they are in any way to frustrate the evils of the public-house.

Why should not Clubs be founded amongst the working classes upon the same principle as they are amongst the rich—Clubs where many by amalgamating could procure those pleasures which are harmless, but which it is impossible for them to have, if acting separately? Were there to be in each district one or more Clubs, to which only respectable men were admitted by election, and which, like all other Clubs, were under certain rules and restrictions, and where the members might meet together, some for instruction in classes, others for amusement, in accordance with their various tastes and inclinations, either in the news-room with reading, or in the smoke-room with smoking and talking, or in the different rooms devoted to games, such as chess, draughts, cards, and, if possible, billiards, there would be much more chance of inducing men to leave those places where there are now so many temptations to evil. The Club principle is a

just and business-like one; it is founded on co-operation and unity of interests. Those who serve derive no advantage from the amount consumed, but are paid a certain fixed salary. They have no interest in enticing men to excess. Were such clubs at first leavened by the moral influence of the clergy of the parish and a few of the resident gentlemen—not ruled by their dictation and control—there is every reason to suppose that they would not be abused.

The chief obstacles in the way of carrying out these three plans are the popular prejudices of the day, and the enormous expense necessary.

The popular prejudices. Unfortunately, the philanthropy of the present day is closely allied with that class of religionists whose sympathies are as limited as their views are narrow, and whose obstinacy is as *insébranlable* as their prejudices are ridiculous. To convert such to views of common sense is utterly out of the question. Their deep-seated antipathy to rational schemes of improvement is the result of their theological opinions. That they wish well to the working classes is attested by their works. In the getting up of tea-parties, the support of Scripture readers, the distribution of tracts, the multiplication of preachers, and in devoted attention to the sick and aged, they are indefatigable. Their zeal is most commendable, springing, as it does in numerous cases, from motives most sincere, if not enlightened. But to measures which tend to advance education or promote health, or in any way ameliorate the social condition of the people, they have generally shown an apathetic indifference—sometimes even displayed a most pertinacious opposition. With them, indeed, the working classes are *pets*. The few are spoiled, the real interests of the majority are neglected. The welfare of the poor is constantly the theme of conversation. The good they wish to bestow upon them is a noble one—it is the salvation of their souls. The raising of their condition in this poor transitory life is a matter too paltry for serious consideration. They see not the connexion between the two, and that provision for the natural must precede that for the spiritual body. Again, some of this party, good as may be their intentions, are somewhat haughty and imperious in their modes of dealing. They will do great

things *for* the working classes—*for* them, they will put themselves to no small amount of trouble ; but it must be *for*, not *with*—not in *co-operation* with them. Their system of government savours more of the paternal than of the fraternal. The working classes must take what they can get, and be thankful. Beggars must not be choosers. If there are any likes of which the good people do not approve, the gratification must be withheld. The very notion of operatives enjoying dancing, or smoking, or cards, is preposterous. Two serious objections immediately suggest themselves. Such practices are not in keeping with their station (and these religious folks are staunch believers in the divine right of those class divisions which favour their own pretensions to respectability). Moreover, they are utterly detrimental to true religion. If the lamentations uttered by such be sincere, the condition of the lower orders must be wretched in the extreme. To ameliorate it, they pray and preach, distribute tracts, and establish lectures for Christian Young Men. They might as well endeavour to mop up the Atlantic. In comparison to the magnitude of the evil, their efforts are as puny as are mites to mountains. The report of work done and advancing, so ostentatiously read at their numerous meetings, smacks of “playing at doing good.” They are no more an index to the real progress of the masses, than were the thousands of Indians whom Francis Xavier sprinkled with his holy water, evidence of the spread of Christianity in Asia ; or than are the number of ancient females, who, for a weekly consideration, attend a daily service, a proof that the privilege is appreciated. From this semi-puritanic, semi-philanthropic class, no comprehensive or effective scheme of improvement can possibly be expected ; therefore, those who really wish well to the working classes must dare to face their denunciations and to discard their influence—an influence once terrible, but which, it is to be hoped, is now fast on the wane.

Even moderate men,—men not over nice or scrupulous—will hesitate to adopt some of the plans suggested. Their hesitation is the fruit of distrust. In those who stand lower in the social scale than themselves, they have not faith. They fear that certain pleasures cannot be enjoyed without abuse. Self-denial and self-restraint are necessary—will these be exercised by

the working classes? Excess is dreaded. This distrust, these doubts and fears, proceed in a great measure from ignorance. How few really know the working classes! How should they? The great majority of masters never see them but in one relation, the relation which exists between themselves as employers and them as employed. They see them not at their homes, at their meals, in the midst of their families, during the hours of relaxation and enjoyment, when the heart is open and the mouth freely speaks what the mind conceives. If they knew them better, they would find that their dispositions are very much the same as those of the men with whom they themselves associate: there is this difference, their temptations are infinitely stronger and more numerous. Naturally, Englishmen love respectability, and desire to be thought respectable. From the queen to the peasant all aim at what is considered respectable in the class above itself. In the fashion of their dress, in the furnishing of their houses, in the nature of their social enjoyments, this is the case.

In doing so they frequently contract habits that are pernicious, and adopt fashions that are ridiculous. They are the habits and the fashions (slightly exaggerated) of those who are styled their betters. But with the evil they take the good. Excessive love of dress may be a vanity, but it is decidedly preferable to an excessive love of drink. To be indulged, it necessitates the restraint of the more animal appetites. It often begets a certain amount of self-respect.

So with regard to pleasures. We have no right to assert that the working classes prefer those that are disreputable to those that are considered respectable. When young men first commence attending the public-house, they themselves are generally respectable—they are made the reverse by the customs and habits of the place. Were its atmosphere untainted with immorality and dissipation, we have no reason to suppose that the games there afforded would injure their characters any more than they do those of richer people. At present they have never had the chance—no plans with these objects in view have been tried. They should be, before they are pronounced failures. They certainly have within them the elements of success.

The expense. To establish playgrounds in different parts of our towns would at first require a very large outlay. Land is scarce and valuable. Each year the difficulty increases. Year by year the towns progress in magnitude; the waste plots of land in their centres are built upon; the circumference is extended; and the fields and country removed further and further from the central inhabitants. The expense would be enormous, to be incurred by private individuals. But surely if they are necessary for health, if they would tend greatly to decrease drunkenness—a vice big with the most costly offences—it is the business of all the ratepayers, to be transacted by their representatives the town councils. A good system of drainage requires a large outlay, but the outlay is reckoned small in comparison with the health improved and the lives saved. For the improvement of health and the saving of lives, the playgrounds are equally as necessary. The evil effects consequent on their want are not so directly perceived as those produced by bad sewerage: it only requires investigation and thought to be convinced that they are as certain and as sure, though not so visible. The expense does seem enormous, but if it would decrease the evils complained of, it would be economy.

Gymnasiums and Clubs are more subjects for private enterprise. At the present day there is abundance of benevolence, if it were only rightly applied. Philanthropy is the fashion. The wants of the masses are on the lips of all. Social science has an especial society to advocate its claims. No expense is spared when the plans proposed recommend themselves to the ideas of philanthropic men. In Manchester a proposal has recently been made to found an art gallery. The sum required is 100,000*l*. One great aim of the institution is to promote the welfare of the working classes; to improve and refine their tastes, and raise and elevate their minds. The object is a noble one, and if the plan be carried out, many and great advantages will indisputably accrue from it: nevertheless, to make it the commencement of an amelioration savours rather of putting the cart before the horse. It would not affect the mass. At present nothing purely mental, or which appeals to the mind through the senses, as works of art do, will. They are like children: their bodies

